

March 1, 2016

Testimony of John D. Molteni, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Resident of Tolland, CT. Associate Professor of Counseling and Applied Behavioral Studies, Director of the Institute for Autism and Behavioral Studies, University of Saint Joseph

In Support of SB 292: AN ACT CONCERNING BEHAVIOR ANALYSTS

Public Health Committee, Wednesday, March 2, 2016 Public Hearing

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is John Molteni and I am a resident of Tolland, CT. I currently am an Associate Professor at the University of Saint Joseph and teach graduate level courses in Applied Behavior Analysis as part of our training program in Applied Behavior Analysis. I am also Director of the Institute for Autism and Behavioral Studies at USJ and serve as the Director of Autism Services at the Hospital for Special Care. I am a licensed Psychologist and Doctoral level Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA-D). I have been a Board Certified Behavior Analyst since 2001 and have worked in CT since 2003.

I am writing today in support of SB 292, AN ACT CONCERNING BEHAVIOR ANALYSTS. This bill will require licensure of behavior analysts and assistant behavior analysts. Applied behavior analysis (ABA) has been recognized in legislation over the years in CT to protect the title of Board Certified Behavior Analyst and Board Certified assistant Behavior Analyst, cover access to ABA services through insurance mandates and, most recently, to ensure access to ABA services for individuals and families to the age of 21 through Medicaid. During this time, the field of behavior analysis has grown and the demand for professionals with appropriate education and training has grown with it. As with any field, the increase in the number of practitioners within a field requires increased consumer protection. Licensure provides that increased level of protection. To date, the only opportunity for responding to violations of practice standards is to report the individual (if certified) to the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB®). Nationally, 24 states have licensure regulations including all of our surrounding neighbors (MA, NY and RI).

With 548 certified BCBAs in the state and a growing number of individuals who are training on our program at USJ and others, the time is now to license behavior analysts and increase the consumer protections that CT has been moving towards over the years. The populations that behavior analysts deal with are often the most vulnerable due to their level of complexity and extensive needs for skill acquisition over repeated training opportunities. This, has been the impetus for legislative action in the past.

I would suggest that, given that intensive ABA therapy requires implementers to provide service over extended hours, an exclusion for direct line staff (e.g., paraprofessional staff) and families serving under the supervision of a Licensed Behavior Analyst be included in the legislation under Section 2(c). This will ensure that ongoing supervision is provided to support the consistent application of behavior analytic interventions.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

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